

Census 2000 Geography Programs in Montana

The U.S. Bureau of the Census now has three geographic programs underway that will help local governments -- counties and municipalities -- to comment on, propose or correct boundaries and addresses that will be used for the collection and tabulation of census 2000 data. Several of these programs will overlap or run concurrently. A parallel program is offered for tribal governments.

Census data is used extensively for fund distribution, grant applications, program administration, planning and development decisions, and a score of other uses by both the public and private sectors. This data will be used throughout the coming decade.

The Statistical Areas Program provides the opportunity to propose boundaries for census tracts, census county divisions, block groups and census designated places (unincorporated places resembling towns). The Statistical Areas Program will be used for the data tabulation products for small areas such as neighborhoods and water and sewer districts. Many federal and state grant programs use median household information of small census subareas for program eligibility.

Census recognized contacts for the statistical area delineation program are the state data center, regional planning agencies, councils of government (note: Montana does not have regional planning agencies or councils of government), county planning agencies, and officials of federally recognized American Indian Tribes. These contacts are eligible to submit statistical area delineation plans on the behalf of their jurisdictions. All interested individuals, agencies and governments within those jurisdictions are invited to participate in the delineation process. The Census Bureau intends that the statistical area delineation program is an open process for all interested participants.

Letters describing the Statistical Areas Program were recently mailed to county commissioners, mayors and city and county planners. The Statistical Areas Program will begin in May and local governments will have six months from receipt of materials for completion. The contact person at the Montana State Data Center is Patricia Roberts, Census and Economic Information Center, Montana Dept. of Commerce. Patricia's phone is 406.444.4393, fax is 406.444.1518 and email is paroberts@mt.gov. Don't put the last period in the email address.

The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) will permit local governments to review the Census Bureau's address registers for additions and corrections. Public Law 103-430, Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994 enables the review and update of the confidential census list of individual addresses. LUCA will replace the Local Review program from 1990. This is the only chance to review the address lists. This program is extremely important because it determines an accurate collection of the data. You may contact Patricia for further information or Frank McPhillips, Census Bureau Denver Regional Census Center, 303.231.5015, fax 303.231.5082, email francis.c.mcphillips@ccmail.census.gov. Don't put the last period in the email address.

The Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS) is sent to local governments -- counties and municipalities - - for verification and updating of political boundaries. Unless the Census Bureau has the correct boundaries, the county or municipality may not be credited with the proper data. The BAS is an annual program. Local governments will have the opportunity to verify and update their annexations and boundaries in 1999 and 2000. The 1998 BAS was mailed in February with a mid-May return date. You may contact the Census Bureau's BAS unit at the Jeffersonville, IN facility at 1-800-972-5653 from 7:00 a.m. till 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

Please participate in these programs to assure the most accurate census possible. Patricia Roberts will be available to assist you or to refer you to the appropriate census personnel. Patricia's phone is 406.444.4393.